



The Jahmee Inquisition...

From as-Sawaa'iq al-Mursalah 'alal-Jahmiyyah wal-Mu'attilah
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Chapter Seven: The Meaning in the Ta'weel Made By the Mu'awwilah Contains The Very Same As That From Which They Originally Fled (of Tashbeeh)¹

This chapter is an amazing one for the one who reflects upon it. By way of [this chapter], it is known that the Muta'awwiloon do not benefit from their ta'weel [in anything], except that they make ta'teel (divestment) of the realities of the texts, fool around with them, and violate the sanctities of these texts, and they do not absolve themselves from that which they considered dangerous.

Rather, [that which they attempted to flee from] is actually binding upon them in that which they fled to [of ta'weel of its meaning to something else], just like it is binding (in their view) in that which they fled from (i.e. the original meaning behind the text).

Rather, they fall into that which is more severely cautioned against, as is the condition of those who made ta'weel of the texts related to [Allaah's] uluww (ascendancy), fawqiyah (aboveness), istiwa (arising [over the Throne]), fleeing from confining and restricting (Him). And then they said that He is in every place, with His essence. Thus, they cleared Him of His arising over His Throne, His being distinct and separate from His creation, and then rendered Him into one who is found inside houses, wells, the sitting rooms and in the places whose mention is not desirable.

These are the forerunners, the earlier ones from the Jahmiyyah. When the later ones came to know of the corruption (of this viewpoint), they said that there is nothing behind the universe, and nor above the Throne, except pure non-existence (i.e. nothingness), and that there is not to be found there, a Lord that is worshipped, or an ilaah (deity) that is prostrated to, or prayed to, and nor is He in the universe. Thus, they made His ascription to the Throne (i.e. His

¹ "As-Sawaa'iq al-Mursalah 'alal-Jahmiyyah wal-Mu'attilah" (1/234-237).

ascending over it) to be just like ascribing Him to the vilest of places, high and exalted is Allaah above their saying, with a mighty exaltation.

And this is also the doing of those who negated the prior ordainment (qadar), who did so in order to free and purify Allaah from willing the repugnant things, and from creating them, and then they ascribed to Him that in His dominion are those things that occur without His willing them, and that He wills that which does not actually take place, and that He is not able to guide an astray person or misguide one who is guided, and nor is He able to turn the heart of a sinner to obedience, nor one who is obedient into a sinner.

And this is also like those who negated from Him His actions, and the fact that He performs them, and then made Him like an inanimate (i.e. lifeless) thing that is not capable of action. And similarly those who negated speech from Him that is linked and tied with his ability (qudrah) and will (mashee'ah), and they made Him like one who is dumb and is not able to speak. And likewise those who negated from Him the attributes of His perfection resembled Him with that which is deficient and devoid of these (perfect attributes), or resembled Him with that which is actually non-existent (ma'doom).

And this is the condition of everyone who falsifies and divests that which Allaah has described Himself with and what His Messenger has described Him with. And what is intended here is that the one who makes ta'weel flees from one matter, and then falls into that which is just the same as it.

And example of that: When he makes ta'weel of "mahabbah" (love), "rahmah" (mercy), "ridaa" (pleasure), "ghadab" (anger), "maqt" (hatred) and interprets them to mean "iraadah" (will). So it is said in reply to him, that whatever was binding (in your view) with respect to those attributes (of love, mercy, pleasure etc. of tashbeeh), then it is also binding upon you with respect to this [attribute of] iraadah (will) – as has already preceded (i.e. in the previous chapter).

And when he makes ta'weel of "wajh" (face) and interprets it to mean dhaat (the self of Allaah), then it is said to him that whatever was binding upon you (by affirming the Face), is also binding upon you concerning [affirmation of] the self (dhaat) and this is because the word "dhaat" can be applied to both that which is eternal and also that which is transitory (muhdath) [i.e. so this necessitates tashbeeh between the two].

And when he makes ta'weel of the word "yad" (hand) with qudrah (power), then the Creator and the creation are described with "qudrah" (power), so you fled from the attribute of hand because it is for the creation, so flee also from the attribute of power, because the creation is also described with it.

And when he makes ta'weel of hearing (sam'), seeing (basr) to mean knowledge ('ilm), fleeing from tashbeeh, then it is also binding upon him to flee from [the attribute] of knowledge. And when he makes ta'weel of aboveness (fawqiyyah) to mean the aboveness of subduing and power (fawqiyyat ul-qahr), then whatever was binding upon him in that which he fled from, which is the aboveness of the essence (fawqiyyat udh-dhaat), is also binding upon him in this, since one who is "qaahir" is the one who is described with "quwwah" (strength) and "ghalabah" (overcoming, subduing), and this cannot be understood except in the form of a body (jism).

But if the intellect affirms it without a jism (body), then it is not incapable of also affirming the aboveness of the essence (fawqiyyat udh-dhaat) without a body (jism). And likewise the one who made ta'weel of finger (isba') with qudrah (power), for qudrah (power) is also an attribute that is established with the one who is being described with it (from the creation), and it is amongst his incidental attributes, parts (a'raad).

Hence, this person merely flees from one attribute to another.

And likewise the one who made ta'weel of laughter (dahak) to mean pleasure (ridaa) and pleasure to mean will (iraadah). He merely flees from one attribute to another, and if only he had affirmed all the attributes as they actually are and did not violate their sanctities. Since ta'weel does not actually save him from that which he is fleeing from. This is because the muta'awwil (one who makes ta'weel) should either affirm a known meaning, or make ta'weel of the word with something that represents pure non-existence (of what is indicated by the word). So if he makes ta'weel of it with a known meaning, whatever that might be, then whatever was binding upon him (of tashbeeh) in that (meaning) which he originally fled from, is also binding upon him (in this meaning that he arrived at with his ta'weel). And if he says, "I affirm this meaning in a manner that does not necessitate tashbeeh (resemblance)", then it is said to him, "If only you had affirmed the meaning that you originally made ta'weel of in a manner that does not necessitate tashbeeh".

And if he says that this is something that cannot be understood, comprehended. Then it is said to him: How then have you managed to understand and comprehend it for the (interpolated) meaning that you yourself have affirmed for it while you and all the people of the Earth only understand those meanings that cannot be observed, known (i.e. the unseen) by way of what they understand of these meanings in what is outwardly observed, known.

And had it not been for this, then you and nobody for that matter would have ever understood anything that is absent (i.e. in the unseen). Hence that (meaning) you have demonstrated in your ta'weel, if it has an equal in what is outwardly observed, then tasbheeh is binding upon you, and if it does not have any equal, then it is not possible for you to ever understand it.²

And if you made ta'weel of the text with that which is pure non-existence, you have made ta'teel of it (i.e. you have divested it of the meaning it represents).

Hence, in your ta'weel you are in between ta'teel (divestment) and tashbeeh (resemblance), alongside your crime against the text itself, and your violation of its sanctity. So if only you had venerated its greatness and preserved its sanctity, and affirmed it and passed it on (as it has come, with its intended meaning), while negating any tashbeeh (resemblance) for it, and refraining from ta'teel (divestment), and in Allaah is success.

² [Translator's Note]: What this means is that the people of the earth, i.e. humankind, can only understand those meanings (from the Unseen) about which they have been informed of in the revelation, in light of those same meanings that are outwardly observed, witnessed and experienced. And had this not been the case, it would be impossible for the mu'awwil (the one who makes ta'weel) and anybody else to ever understand anything that is from the unseen and about which we have been formed.

Benefits and lessons from this tribunal

1. The Prosecution today makes apparent the true nature of the actions and behaviour of the Mu'awwilah. In reality, the Mu'awwilah – in their claim of ta'weel, and freeing Allaah from imperfections (tanzeeh) – only perform the following: a) divest the texts of their realities and their meanings b) fool around with the texts and c) violate the sanctity of these texts.

2. And in these three crimes of theirs all they do is hop from one meaning (i.e. the original meaning) that they claim is tashbeeh, to another meaning, which in reality contains the same danger (if we apply their own reasoning and principles) of tashbeeh. Rather, they sometimes fall into that which is worse than what they originally intended to save themselves from.

3. The key to the Prosecution's case in this tribunal is the firmly established fact that it is not possible for any of humankind to understand the meaning of what they have been informed of (of the affairs of the unseen etc.) except by way of the meanings that they know and understand from what they outwardly observe, see and experience. In light of this, when the Mu'awwil makes his ta'weel and arrives at a particular meaning, then that meaning itself only represents something that is known, observed and experienced. And thus, he himself has made tashbeeh (resemblance) according to his own principles. So for example, when the Ash'ari says, "hand" means "power" (qudrah), then what is understood to be "qudrah" is only known by way of what is outwardly observed, known and experienced. So qudrah (power) is seen in humans, it is seen in natural phenomena, it is seen in wild animals, it is seen in mechanical things and so on – and so the attribute of qudrah cannot be understood except by way of what is outwardly observed and seen. Hence, running away from the attribute of "hand" claiming it is tashbeeh, and seeking refuge in the attribute of "power" does not save the Ash'ari from what he originally intended to flee from.

And this applies to the Mu'tazili, and the Jahmee in whatever ta'weels they make. If however, the Mu'awwil makes ta'weel of the original meaning with a meaning that is pure non-existence (i.e. he divests the word from its meaning altogether, and claims it indicates no meaning) – then upon this, it is not possible for any of humankind to understand anything from those matters that are unseen – and thus we would be in complete total compound ignorance of them – and thus, this would mean that whatever occurs in the Book and the Sunnah of the affairs of the unseen, are useless texts, with no significance, and which do not affect the feelings and emotions – as they have no meanings to them – and this is pure falsehood.

Thus, it is inevitable that the Mu'awwil, in order to free himself from tashbeeh, in reality, and in truth, that he affirm the original meanings of the texts, while negating any likeness for them, and without divesting them of their meanings. Otherwise, he will merely hop from one attribute to another.

4. The Prosecution also illustrates a startling fact, which is that the Mu'awwil is in reality guilty of two crimes, which are sequential: First he commits tashbeeh – as he claims that the meanings in the Book and the Sunnah are tasbheeh. So th resemblance begins in his heart, and this leads him to ta'teel (divestment) – which is to negate the original meaning, either with ta'weel or without it. Hence, the affair of every mu'awwil is suspended between tashbeeh and ta'teel.